



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 353

January Session, 2003

House Bill No. 5658

House of Representatives, April 15, 2003

The Committee on Labor and Public Employees reported through REP. RYAN of the 139th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT EXPANDING THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 7-294e of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2003*):

3 (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of any general statute or special
4 act or local law, ordinance or charter to the contrary, each police officer
5 shall forfeit his appointment and position unless recertified by the
6 council according to procedures and within the time frame established
7 by the council.

8 (b) The Police Officer Standards and Training Council may adopt
9 any regulations it deems necessary to carry out the provisions of
10 section 7-294a, subsection (a) of section 7-294b, sections 7-294c, 7-294d
11 and this section in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, giving
12 due consideration to the varying factors and special requirements of

13 law enforcement units. Such regulations shall be binding upon all law
14 enforcement units, except the Division of State Police within the
15 Department of Public Safety.

16 (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of regulations adopted under
17 subsection (b) of this section, any person certified as a police officer on
18 and after the effective date of this section shall have such certification
19 revoked unless not more than five years after certification such person
20 attains an associate's degree or its equivalent from an accredited
21 institution.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	October 1, 2003

PS *Joint Favorable C/R*

LAB

LAB *Joint Favorable*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Type	FY 04 \$	FY 05 \$
Public Safety, Dept.	GF - Cost	Potential	Potential

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 04 \$	FY 05 \$
Municipal Police Departments	STATE MANDATE - Cost	Potential	Potential

Explanation

The bill requires police officers to obtain an associate's or equivalent degree from an accredited institution. While there is no requirement for a degree, the Department of Public Safety offers tuition reimbursement for officers who take courses at accredited institutions.¹ The department currently spends about \$25,000 per year for this purpose. To the extent that this practice continues, passage of the bill could result in additional costs. Similarly, for those municipalities that offer education reimbursement, there would be potential costs.

¹ The reimbursement rate is determined through collective bargaining agreement. The current rate ranges between \$75 and \$100 per credit.

OLR Bill Analysis

HB 5658

AN ACT EXPANDING THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires local police officers certified after September 30, 2003 to obtain an associate's or equivalent degree from an accredited institution within five years after certification. It requires the Police Officers Standards and Training (POST) Council to revoke the certificate of any police officer who does not comply.

It is unclear if the bill applies to state police officers as well, even though the revocation mandate includes the phrase "any person certified as a police officer."

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2003

POST COUNCIL

By law, this council sets minimum training and education standards for police officers under its jurisdiction. This includes all municipal police officers, but state police officers and a few other groups are specifically exempt. The council is authorized to certify officers under its jurisdiction and renew and revoke certificates on specified grounds. Under the council's current regulations, from which state police officers are also explicitly exempt, a candidate must have a high school diploma or approved equivalent before he can be appointed as a probationary candidate (Conn. Agency Reg. § 7-294e-16). Probationary candidates are police officers who have satisfied preemployment requirements, but not training requirements. After satisfying training requirements, probationary candidates are certified by the council.

The bill (1) amends a statute dealing with the council's authority to recertify and adopt regulations for police officers under its jurisdiction and (2) states that the change supersedes the council's authority to adopt regulations pertaining to certification. But it does not amend the statute that sets the minimum qualification (high school diploma or

equivalent) for entry to the state police academy (CGS § 29-3a), nor does it indicate that it supercedes that statute. Thus, it is unclear if the bill applies to state police officers.

The statutes do not include certification requirements or certificate revocation requirements for state police officers similar to those relating to POST. In practice, state police officers complete a probationary period and training at the state police academy and the unit commander certifies that they have completed the training and may be sworn. But they are not certified in the same sense as municipal police officers.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference

Yea 20 Nay 0

Labor and Public Employees Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 9 Nay 5